

BIRD SONGS

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Discovery Center Bird Club

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President's Message

by Mark Westphal

Our Thursday morning bird walks are the focal point of our Bird Club activities. Typically, an email is sent out on Sunday informing the membership where our bird walk will take place on the following Thursday. Participants usually meet at the appointed place around 7:00 a.m. and, after about three hours of birding, we call it a day and head back home. The bird walks have been occurring for so many years that it might be easy to take them for granted, and not fully appreciate their purpose and benefits.

First, our walks would not be as successful and run so smoothly if not for the effort and dedication of Donna Roche. Donna's Sunday emails provide us with clear instructions for where to go and how to get to the selected destination. Our outing destinations are chosen and timed to take advantage of peak birding opportunities at those particular locations. Once Donna has completed her Sunday message, it is sent to the membership by John Randolph who has been kind enough to serve as our email conduit for our official Bird Club communications.

Once we arrive at a Thursday morning location, a group leader will help keep participants moving and focused so we can have a productive birding experience. Finally, at the end of the walk, several members who have volunteered to record the numbers and species of birds that were either seen or heard will get together and compare notes so that our birding checklist will be as accurate as possible. Over time, these records will help to identify changes to bird populations due to habitat loss, climate change, or other environmental factors. In this way, our bird walks are part of our own ongoing "citizen science" project.

Our Bird Club outings provide a fun, relaxed way to improve birding skills, but the benefits of our Thursday morning outings frequently go beyond birding. As we travel the birding trail, we often have a chance to learn about new plants or insects or share an interesting wildlife sighting. Although birding is our primary focus, you cannot help but notice and appreciate some of the other beautiful creations mother nature has to offer. Our Club not only helps to connect people with nature, but also people to people. Birding with Club members contributes to our social wellbeing.

Thanks to all those who help plan, organize, lead, and record our Bird Club outings. Also, thanks to the people who support and participate in our Thursday morning adventures. If you haven't been to a Bird Club outing in a while, come and join us. We would love to see you!

Species Profile: Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon)

Article by Carne Andrews; Photos by Macaulay Library and F.H. Herrick

Of the over 100 species of kingfishers worldwide, only one, the Belted Kingfisher is common in North America. The smaller Green Kingfisher and

the larger Ringed Kingfisher are found in northern regions of their winter range across the southern southwestern U.S states and in Florida, but not in the Keyes.

Belted Kingfishers are excellent hunters and fascinating to watch! In the US and Canada, they are almost exclusively fish eaters. Look for them near clear water streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and saltwater coastal shorelines. They often perch high on an exposed branch, utility pole, wire or hover 30-40 feet over water. When a minnow or small fish is spotted close to the surface of the water, they plunge headfirst into the water to the depth of their bill to spear an unsuspecting meal, then return to a perch to thump their catch to its death to swallow it whole. Like most fish eating species, their mandibles are serrated to secure the wiggly slippery catch.

Stand-out identification characteristics include a very shaggy spikey crest, a thick heavy 2 inch black dagger-like bill longer than the width of the head, and very short legs with syndactyl toes, the second and third digits being fused. Belted Kingfishers are dimorphic, meaning the males and females do not look alike. It is one of the few species where the female is more colorful than the male. Both sexes are 12-13 inches in length with stocky chunky bodies. In both sexes, the back and disproportionately large head are bluish-gray with a white spot in front of the eyes. The short, square tail and wings are minutely speckled white with the throat, entire breast and belly, and vent white. Each sex has a blue-gray band across the upper breast. The female has a distinguishing rusty "belt" across her mid-breast and base of the wings.

Female



Male



Macaulay Library Photos

These birds are often heard before seen! They are heard while flying with fast uneven wing beats like a straight arrow to its destination. Although a mechanical rattle (kek-kek-,kek...) in flight is the most common, there are 4 distinct vocalizations. A harsh call can be heard from the male early in the breeding season hoping to attract a mate. When a female selects her mate after his aerial display and offer of food, she responds with low-pitched chattering inviting copulation. A scream call is an intense fast tempo chattering raised at the end of a rattle used either as a greeting or in confrontation.

Belted Kingfishers are solitary except during breeding season. In spring, the males return first to claim their previous breeding territory. Pairs are monogamous during each breeding season, however, form new mating pairs each year. During fall migration to open water feeding grounds, males remain further north than females in order to secure their breeding territory early in spring. Females migrate as far as Mexico, Central America, and northern South America.

Once the pair bond is established, a new nesting site or a previous established nest is selected. If a previous nest is not reused, both mates begin 2 weeks of work excavating a channel in a dirt bank along a shoreline, in a gravel pit, or in a road construction site near water. The male begins by slashing and probing with his beak, then scooping the soil away with his feet to first create a 5 inch entrance hole. The female soon joins in. With alternating efforts between the pair, a 4-8 foot channel is excavated with an upward slant to facilitate water drainage. It ends with a 10 inch in diameter dome-shaped nesting chamber. A shorter cavity is also excavated near the nest site as a resting spot for the adults between incubation shifts.

Typically, 5-8 glossy white eggs are laid on the bare ground or on top of scattered fish remnants in a reused nest. Both parents fully participate in incubation and feeding once the eggs hatch. Nestlings are altricial at birth, meaning physically immature, without feathers, and completely dependent on the care of both parents. Parents are kept busy providing up to 8 minnows a day for each nestling. Hatchlings are born with acidic stomachs capable of digesting fish bones and scales. By the time they fledge, their stomachs change and undigested matter is regurgitated in pellets like their parents.

As the nestlings mature, they begin to learn instinctive behaviors. They, like the adults, do not stand on their toes but on the entire length of the tarsus (lower leg). Initially, they only walk backwards around the nesting chamber biting and teasing each other like young puppies. When resting, they may form a warm cluster referred to as “The King Row” as seen below. As they grow in size and strength, each will begin to take a few forward steps into the channel toward the entrance but quickly retreat backwards when food arrives.

The King Row



Photo by F.H. Herrick

When the nestlings fledge after about 30 days, the adults teach their young to fish by dropping dead prey into the water for retrieval from a low perch. Belted Kingfishers do not swim so these training sessions are dangerous and may result in drowning before the young become proficient hunters. Parents will continue to assist with feeding for about 3 weeks but then force the young to fledge from the nest to fend for themselves.

Belted Kingfishers are found in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties. The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Wisconsin (2000) reports a slight 1% annual decline primarily due to loss of habitat due to urban sprawl and to development around northern lakes. However, populations are considered stable and kingfishers seem to have the ability to adapt to increased human presence. So this summer as you enjoy hiking, biking, paddling, and birding near Wisconsin's extensive waterways, listen for the Belted Kingfisher's loud in-flight rattle and watch for this intriguing bird darting straight as an arrow from perch to perch or hovering overhead!

Bibliography: Atlas of Breeding Birds in Wisconsin; Cornell University Macaulay Library; Home Life of Wild Birds; The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior.

Up North Hammerheads/Great Wisconsin Birdathon **Wrap-up for 2022**

Article by Sarah Besadny, Bird and Dragonfly Photos by Mark Westphal

This year the Up North Hammerheads once again participated in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon (GWB). The GWB is a months-long event sponsored by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to help raise money for various bird protection funds. Our Club's team, the Up North Hammerheads, has participated in the GWB since 2016. This year the team consisted of 16 individuals including three people who had not been on the team in the past – welcome Frank, Lori and Julie.



Team Up North Hammerheads 2022

What does participating in a birdathon mean? You form a team, select a date to head out birding anywhere in the state of Wisconsin, try to spot as many birds as possible and most importantly, raise money for birds.

The Up North Hammerheads headed out on May 23rd and it couldn't have been a more perfect weather day! Not too hot, not too cold, and not too windy. Yay! With that luck on our side, we also hoped we'd be treated to a large variety of bird species and we were not disappointed.

Our day started at 6:00 a.m. at Powell Tribal. We headed south on the dike road towards Chewelah Lake hoping to see a Least Bittern that had been reported there a few days before. We missed out on the bittern but we had a wonderful variety of birds including great looks at a Palm Warbler, Yellow Warbler (with an interestingly somewhat rusty head), Nashville Warbler, Sedge Wren, Magnolia Warbler and we spotted a late-season Rough-legged Hawk. From there our group briefly split into two so that we could cover a little more area. One group headed to Sherman Lake and spotted a Cape May warbler and had great looks at a Blackburnian Warbler. The other group went to the area around the maintenance building for Powell Marsh and there they picked up our only Blue-headed Vireo for the day.



Sedge Wren



Eastern Kingbird



Short-billed Dowitcher

We all converged at Powell Vista in hopes of seeing some shorebirds, bittern, rails and terns. We weren't sure about spotting shorebirds since the water levels all over the area had been quite high all Spring. But we hit the jackpot with shorebirds, first when a group of Dunlin were spotted by Frank's sharp eyes. Then through more thorough scanning with spotting scopes we also saw both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper and Short-billed Dowitcher. We continued on down the path to a spot where several people had been spotting a bittern in recent days. Darn if we didn't see one at that area but we did spot an American Coot. We also didn't see the Black Terns that had been spotted by Mike when he was still up at the parking area while the rest had started hiking the trail. As we made our way back to the parking area thinking "how could we possibly NOT see a bittern here?" one flushed out of the dike edge. Yippee!

Our next stop was Mann Creek. This spot is unusual this year in that the water has drained out of the creek area seen from Hwy N. We picked up Belted Kingfisher but not the Rusty Blackbirds that had been there earlier in May. So, it was on to Allequash Lake for Black Terns... and they were there! So too was a late season male Bufflehead.

We gathered for a picnic lunch at Cathedral Point and the opportunity to scan Trout Lake for gulls, terns, mergansers, etc. We spotted numerous Ring-billed Gulls, and several groups of terns as we travelled the lake edge. We went to the boat landing to get a better look at the terns concluding they were Common Terns and Liza and Dick spotted Forster's Terns . At this location we also saw a Phoebe, Common Mergansers and heard a Tennessee Warbler.

We proceeded south to the Fish Hatchery area off of Hwy J. While walking the road we heard a racket coming from a group of American Robins. A Merlin was flitting about in the same tree (not a good sign) but it was interesting to watch the bravery of the robins as they tried and tried to get the Merlin to move on. Further down the road we all had great looks at a Blackpoll Warbler.

Our next stop was Dove Road outside of Lake Tomahawk. We were hoping for several species here including Mourning Warbler, Brown Thrasher and

Golden-winged Warbler. We were skunked on all three but enjoyed seeing a hummingbird perched on a snag that has been used by hummers in year's past.



Dove Road may not have been very "birdy" but you can always count on seeing dragonflies, like this Four-spotted Skimmer

Our final stop for the day is always downtown Minocqua. We have two target birds here: House Sparrow and Chimney Swift. Shortly after we arrived we spotted a small group of Chimney Swifts. Yay! While walking through the downtown area, Donna noticed a bird across the street in a bush. As we all worked to get on the bird, it darted across the street past us – a House Sparrow. Double yay! Donna is an expert at knowing where to go to look for birds and she led us to several areas around town where we picked up Warbling Vireo and a special opportunity to get great looks at a Canada Warbler.

By this time it was just past 6:00 p.m. – that made for 12 hours of non-stop birding, over 8 miles of walking, spotting Wilson's Warblers "about everywhere we looked" and certainly loads of fun!! We wrapped up the day with 108 species!! As mentioned, our team has been participating in the Birdathon since 2016. Although during the two "covid years" we had greater numbers of species, that was due to the fact that we birded separately or in small groups and therefore were able to cover a much greater area. Our 108 species is a record for birding as a group. Thanks for everyone who joined the team this year. Having so many eyes and ears in pursuit of birds results in wonderful experiences together.

Now on to the really exciting part of our participation we raised \$2,900!!!! That's fantastic! And wait for it the Great Wisconsin Birdathon raised \$113,433! That's just truly amazing and we are all so happy to be part of this wonderful event supporting the thing that has brought us all together ... our love of BIRDS.

DC Bird Club Thursday Outing Recaps - Spring 2022 **with Photos of the Birders!**

Article by Donna Roche

Introduction: Last year I started what I hoped would be a good way to remember what the DC Bird Club Thursday outing groups have accomplished, where they have gone and who went on these outings. I would like to continue here with 'the spring collection' of birders in 'fashion for the season' that only our BIRD SONGS (magazine) would publish! I hope you have fun finding yourself, seeing what you wore, remembering all the birds that you identified, what you learned and generally recalling a good time and experience. And now, the spring collection....



Recap of May 5th birding at Powell Marsh Vista: It was a GREAT start for our birding season! Twenty-two regulars, often-timers, occasional, and first time outings folks came out for the morning! Many of the group gathered at the new Vista Overlook sign to pose for a photo! I arrived shortly before the meeting time at 7 a.m. and was met with cranes calling and at least 7 vehicles already in the parking lot. Some folks were here since 6:30 and before!! By the time we actually set out down the trail to the dike, our vehicles overflowed the parking lot! It was quite cool (34 degrees) to start, but spring was in the air and the morning continued to warm with filtered sunlight and calm winds. We had found swans, several species of ducks, geese and shorebirds from the overlook. As we walked the main dike, we found several species of sparrow. We walked straight ahead at second pool area and were treated with looks at pintails and widgeons. Here we also found our only warbler, Palm! Looking far west, one of our great sighted birders spotted a hawk sitting in a tree....we all got good scoped looks at the Rough-legged! We turned back to continue walking the main trail. We spent time finding the Greater amongst the many Lesser Yellowlegs and 'rousting' a snipe that was on the ground. Our last bird species was a bittern who stuck its head up long enough for two birders to see it! There was a total of **42 species!!**



Somebody forgot to take a photo for the second outing :(

But, this 'Clip Art' photo looks almost like our DC Bird Club birders to fill the space....:)



Recap of May 12 outing at NLDC River Trail: A group of eight BC birders met at the NLDC River Trail to find birds and to start their Helping Hands volunteer work a couple of hours earlier than their commitment time. However, over the years since the DC Bird Club developed the Birding Trail at the Discovery Center, the club has checked out and cleaned those signs at least once a year. Carne Andrews has taken it upon herself to make sure that if any repair or replacement is needed for the Bird Trail, she gets it done! Thank you, Carne, for your commitment to this special BC project's maintenance. So this day, she prepared a bucket of cleaning supplies that we carried along to clean off all the signage along the trail. So, in addition to cleaning, inspecting signs, we also cleared branches from the trail. Oh yah, we also got a very nice list of birds along the way. We found waterfowl, woodpeckers, common woods birds and 8 species of warblers! There was a total of **26 species!**



Recap of May 19 outing at Hwy 47/51 area and Little Turtle Flowage:

A group of 15 BC birders met at the Ding-a-Ling Restaurant parking lot as we usually do for this outing to spend a short time along the Hwy 47 bridge that crosses the over the Manitowish River. Although this spot can be noisy with motor traffic going by, we gather here for several reasons. The first is to lead, especially the new comers to LTF which can be tricky (this day the Joe's Shack Road sign was nowhere to be seen??). Other reasons are species of birds that can be found along the river here and from the road and that we can 'peek' into the Bates/Burns' great bird feeding yard nearby! It was a cool and overcast day, but birds were out feeding and gathering nest materials at both of our stops. a half hour of active birding produced a list of 22 species! At the flowage, we found several species of ducks and 6 species of warblers including 3 different sightings of Wilson's Warblers. The Osprey nest was active and we had several flyovers of osprey, cranes, and Bald Eagle. Later, 1 swan appeared, leaving me to think another was hidden, perhaps nesting, in the reeds. The creek was running over the Bluebird Trail, so we turned back here and went into the woods on the other side of parking lot. Good thing because we got a nice looks and photos of a Porcupine to end our morning's adventure! Our species list totaled **33 species**.



Recap of May 26th outing: A group of 5 BC birders met up at the Willow Flowage dam area parking lot. It was not the kind of day that

birders look forward to... it was damp and cloudy after a full day of rain. However, we were rewarded with our efforts of 'getting ourselves out there'. The birds were active, doing their business of the day and season. As we walked around the edges of the large boat trailer parking area, we found a number of birds including the Canada Warbler which had been a new species for a number of folks at Birdathon. After checking out the area below the dam and along the shore, we moved on to the Nature Trail. Here, we have seen change over the years from lush forest, to cleared logging area, to what it is today showing new growth. We were able to catch looks at some of the birds, but a thrush eluded our identification... darn! I know that the day would have been different had the sun been out, but we enjoyed finding the birds we did.... **25 Species.**



Recap of June 2nd outing: We had a terrific birding outing to the **Vandercook Road** area last Thursday! **Thanks to Sarah Besadny** for sharing her knowledge of this area and birding expertise. She led 15 enthusiastic DC birders along the ATV road and helped many of us to hear and see many birds! Thank you, Sarah! The stretch of trail that we walked was along an off-shoot of Vandercook perhaps midway between its length. There was a clear delineation of habitat areas and the bird species found in each area. The group was able to find a number of the 'target' birds including the Golden-winged Warbler. We heard that bird several times along the way and later one made a brief, but memorable appearance! Our

bird species lists also included Indigo Bunting, Black-billed Cuckoo and Eastern Towhee for a total of **45 species!**



Recap of June 9 outing: Our group of 9 DC Bird Club birders really enjoyed a spectacular day in Ashland on this day. The day started out nice and got warmer at each stop we made along the way. We were surprised by the lack of gulls and geese along the shoreline stops, but felt good about the many Common Terns at Bayview Park. We did find many warblers at Bayview and the other parks including Redstarts, Yellow and Chestnut-sided. The Warbling Vireo was heard, but not seen, at two locations. Highlights were finding a Baltimore Oriole nest with two attending adults and getting great looks at an adult Peregrine Falcon nearby the nesting box at the power plant. We're pretty sure that another adult was sitting in the nest box....chicks soon?! After having our walk at Prentice Park we visited the nicely maintained trail on the west side of the Long Bridge. As Amy titled her email to me... 'fun day to Ashland' and it was! Check out the combined list below of **54 species!**



Recap of June 16th outing: This has definitely been a great warbler season for our Thursday outings. At the **Dove Road area** our group of 15 birders found 11 species of warblers! As you may recall, the day before had been very stormy with a good amount of rain. The very sandy unpaved trail at the Dove area had the many large potholes filled with rain water. I think we would have seen more birds eager to get out and about except for the strong winds that continued during our walk. However, birds were around with their songs and calls. We were very pleased to hear Golden-winged Warbler still in the habitat that has matured during the years that we have been coming here. Later after doing just a bit of persistence, many did get quick looks at one who was curious about us before flipping out of sight. Besides talking specifically about habitat, we also listed the bird species we usually have found in this location and were pleased that we found most of them. We did not find the Indigo Bunting or any White-throated Sparrows. **Total bird species were 23!**



Recap of June 23rd outing at Star Lake: Well... it was disappointing and it was sad that after suggesting and doing all the preparation work, Sarah Besadny was not able to lead the walk at Star Lake because she was not well. So, she talked me through where she planned to walk explaining the area in Old Mill Centennial Park and what birds we should look for. The actual layout of this park is lovely and very well maintained with a large open space and a wide, mowed trail around the small point of land. But first we walked to the observation pier where the group of 15 birders (Ed M. is missing from the photo) were greeted by a female Common Merganser resting on it. After she left (dang humans) the whole group was able to walk on the pier and scope the lake and far shores. It was quiet on the water and in the air, but we did find 2 loons. We did see and hear birds along the short trail in the shrubs and tall trees. Along with the grackles and blackbirds we heard and saw the Yellow, Chestnut-sided and Mourning Warblers. It took some time and coxing to finally see the Mourning Warbler. Although this first area was delightful, we did not spend as much time as planned, so we walked a shoreline path to the campground, followed the road up to the Nature Trail and walked the Red Trail. All along the way, we found new bird species including another species that Sarah hoped we find...the Cape May Warbler! It really was a great area to bird and surprisingly one just a few had been to before. Thanks again, Sarah. Let's do it again when YOU can lead! Check out the species list below with **37 species**, including 11 species of warblers!

The outing to Star Lake was our last 'Spring' outing! Next week, we move on into our 'Summer' outings. Hurrah! I hope many of you will be able to come to the outings. There are more great places to bird and many new species to find. Please feel free to let me know about any suggestions you have for destinations or improvements in procedures. I would also appreciate help in putting together and leading the outings. Let me know....

Big thank yous to Liz S., Carne A., Mary J., and Denise H. and all who volunteer to keep the ebird lists for the group, for the recaps and for our extensive DC Bird Club records.

Big thank you to John Randolph for keeping the communication between all of us so smooth, easy and dependable!!

And as always, thank you to all of you who come out to participate in Thursday outings, to actively bird, to call out the birds you find, to share your expertise in all areas of nature, and to share the joy of birding!!

Almost all of the photos were taken by Donna R. (I just love that I can say that)!

Bluebirds at My Window

Article and Photos by Mark Westphal

As spring draws near I always have a sense of anticipation for which bird will return to my yard and neighborhood. One of my earliest “sign of spring” is when the first trumpeter swans seek out a sliver of open water on the Manitowish River. When the swans return, ice still hugs the banks of the river and snow still blankets the nearby woods. Although the return of the Trumpeter Swans hints at the coming of spring, the remnants of winter still cover the landscape. For me, the possible return of Eastern Bluebirds to the field outside my living room window is the real first “sign of spring”. I say “possible return” because although I hope the bluebirds will return, there is no guarantee that they will.



For three years in a row bluebirds were kind enough to choose one of two nest boxes that are visible from my living room window. Last year a single bluebird visited the yard and even perched on top of a couple of the birdhouses. Sadly, it decided to move on.

With no bluebirds in 2021, I felt somewhat anxious about their return in 2022. 2021 was a difficult year for bluebirds in Wisconsin. An early spring storm in the southern part of the state killed thousands of migrating birds, including bluebirds. Had that storm killed “my” bluebirds? Was the cycle of bluebirds in my yard broken by a distant weather event?

2022 has been a rollercoaster of bluebird sightings and behaviors. This year my first bluebird sighting was around the first week in May. My hopes that a bluebird would once again nest in our field grew. As in previous years, a male bluebird checked out the nesting boxes, but disappeared after two days. My confidence about having a resident bluebird wavered. I now speculate that these “early birds” may not even be serious about nesting in my neighborhood. They may just be checking things out as they migrate further north. A few days after the bluebird disappeared, tree swallows arrived. These little miniature jet fighters swooped and swerved in search of a still limited supply of flying insects. They did not hesitate to battle for and lay claim to every nesting box in the field, including the two prime locations outside my living room window. It did not take the tree swallows long to start gathering nesting materials and begin moving in.

A week later, I spotted a brilliantly colored male bluebird resting on a fence post out in the field. My first thought was that I was happy to see him. My second thought was “You’re a little late buddy ... All the prime real estate has been taken”. For the next several days, the male bluebird was seen and heard at various locations around the field. He spent the next several days rotating from trees, fence posts, and roof tops, softly calling for a mate. After three or four days, I was beginning to wonder if he, too, would not find a mate and move on. Then, to my relief, a female bluebird appeared. We had a pair! What about a place to nest? Hadn’t the tree swallows already laid claim to all the birdhouses outside my living room window?



Now, with strength in numbers and a common purpose, the bluebird power couple was ready to stake their claim. They alternated between two nest boxes, both of which seemed to have been already claimed by tree swallows. Even while the tree swallows continued to bring nesting materials to the boxes, the bluebirds confidently made their presence known. Eventually the bluebirds made their choice. If there were any major battles, I never saw one. The tree swallows stopped coming back to the nest box selected by the bluebirds. Once I saw the female bluebird enter the house, I knew they had found their “forever home” ...at least for the summer.

As I write this article, there are four baby bluebirds in the nest box outside our living room window. Both the male and female bluebirds diligently search the nearby grassland for all manner of flying, hopping, and crawling

insects to feed their growing nestlings. Fifty feet away another nest box houses an equally busy family of tree swallows.

I have always had a fondness for bluebirds. There is a special connection when we humans can build a house that is accepted by birds. This simple wooden box provides shelter for a family of birds. In return we are given a literal window into their daily lives. We get to observe their challenges, their successes, and sometimes their misfortunes. As I stated earlier, there are seldom guarantees in nature. For this year, I am grateful for the opportunity to watch the bluebirds outside my living room window and enjoy the sight of those little birds that carry the sky on their backs.



NLDC Bird Feeding Station

Article by Sarah Besadny

You've probably enjoyed at least a few minutes watching the activity at the bird feeders when you visit the NLDC. Did you know that this area is designed and maintained by your fellow bird club members?

The "feeding station" has been in place for over a decade with the goal of providing an area for education, bird watching and bird banding. Over the past few years the area has been improved upon with a water feature and native plants. As we all know, certain birds are drawn to feeders – be they seed, suet or nectar. But by adding a water feature and native plants, that variety of bird species is likely to increase. Water features have

proven to attract a wide variety of birds. Native plants attract insects and these in turn attract birds that eat the insects themselves and also feed them to their young.

Club member Bruce Bacon has set up a bird banding station in this area for many years now to band birds for educational and scientific purposes. The enhancements to the feeding station result in greater opportunities to teach the public about birds.

A group of Bird Club members worked to install the water feature last year. Support for this work came from a Bird City grant. In their latest newsletter, Bird City highlighted the feeding station and installation of the water feature (you can read the article by doing a web search for Bird City Wisconsin).

Native plantings have been a focus of Donna Roche's for number of years. Before putting too much time and effort into plantings, it was wise to first see how the NLDC campus may change as it realizes its Pathways to New Discoveries campus expansion. Numerous plants and shrubs were planted last fall and I'm sure we can expect to see more as time goes on.

Keeping the feeding station in good repair is a year round job. Anita Flantz dedicates time each week from May through September to keep the feeders full and to repair/replace feeders that may have been hit by squirrels, bears or fallen tree branches. During the winter, a dedicated crew volunteers for a month or two each to keep the feeders full for the winter resident birds. It's not always easy. The snow can be deep and the frigid temperatures make the use of fingers a little less nimble. Yet these volunteers come each week to ensure the birds have access to food and water, both critical to their survival in the winter months. This past winter's crew included Donna Roche, Carne Andrews, Debby Wilson, Amy Sheldon (Tom E. too!) and Mark Westphal. Many thanks goes out to these volunteers who keep the station going year round.

Life List Quarterly – Second Quarter 2022

By Sarah Besadny

So, for those of you who have birded on at least one Club outing or participated in the Birdathon, what has been your favorite bird sighting so far this year? Maybe its getting great looks on at one of the color kings of the warbler world: Blackburnian, Magnolia, Yellow? Maybe it was seeing a species new to you? Or maybe it was watching some interesting bird behavior? Whatever it may have been, being out birding brings a sense of joy and awe.

Our Club's seven outings and the birdathon have resulted in an annual species list of 127 birds through June 23, 2022. Not too shabby. Birding different areas and birding different habitats increases the chances of seeing a broader variety of birds and our Club outings offer both. There are many more outings before we wrap things up at the end of October for our birding year. Who knows what additional species might be added to this list of 127?

Discovery Center Bird Club 2022 Annual Species List through 6/23/2022:

Canada Goose	American Bittern	Eastern Bluebird
Trumpeter Swan	Great Blue Heron	Veery
Wood Duck	Turkey Vulture	Hermit Thrush
Blue-winged Teal	Osprey	American Robin
American Wigeon	Northern Harrier	Gray Catbird
Mallard	Bald Eagle	European Starling
American Black Duck	Broad-winged Hawk	Cedar Waxwing
Northern Pintail	Rough-legged Hawk	Purple Finch
Green-winged Teal	Belted Kingfisher	Common Redpoll
Ring-necked Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	American Goldfinch
Greater Scaup	Downy Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow
Bufflehead	Hairy Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Pileated Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Northern Flicker	Song Sparrow
Common Merganser	Merlin	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Peregrine Falcon	Swamp Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Eastern Towhee
Rock Pigeon	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Baltimore Oriole
Mourning Dove	Alder Flycatcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	Least Flycatcher	Brown-headed Cowbird
Chimney Swift	Eastern Phoebe	Common Grackle
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Great Crested Flycatcher	Ovenbird
Sora	Eastern Kingbird	Northern Waterthrush
Sandhill Crane	Blue-headed Vireo	Golden-winged Warbler
Killdeer	Warbling Vireo	Black-and-white Warbler
Dunlin	Red-eyed Vireo	Tennessee Warbler
Least Sandpiper	Blue Jay	Nashville Warbler
Pectoral Sandpiper	American Crow	Mourning Warbler
Short-billed Dowitcher	Common Raven	Common Yellowthroat
Wilson's Snipe	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	American Redstart
Spotted Sandpiper	Tree Swallow	Cape May Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Barn Swallow	Northern Parula
Lesser Yellowlegs	Black-capped Chickadee	Magnolia Warbler
Ring-billed Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Blackburnian Warbler
Herring Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch	Yellow Warbler
Black Tern	House Wren	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Common Tern	Sedge Wren	Blackpoll Warbler
Forster's Tern	Marsh Wren	Palm Warbler
Common Loon	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Pine Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Yellow-rumped Warbler

Black-throated Green Warbler
Canada Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Scarlet Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
House Sparrow